

VA-YAC

Fall Issue, 2004

The New and Improved YOU!

*Don't wait around for New Year's resolutions!
Make changes for the better now!*

The NEW YOU

- ✓ *New Mentality!*
- ✓ *New Look!*
- ✓ *New Goals!*
- ✓ *New Plan!*

In this issue...

- 👁 College prep
- 👁 Planning for your future
- 👁 What kind of parent do you want to be?



Be heard · Be active · Make changes

Ahhhh summer, the word is synonymous with relaxation and free time, but this summer how about revamping your outlook on life? Summer is a perfect time to take steps to make yourself the best that you can be!

Have an old habit that you've been meaning to get rid of? Not sure what your plans are for your future? Tired of your same old boring look? Or do you just want to strive to be happier with yourself? Now is the best time to reflect on these things and plan to make changes. In this issue of the newsletter, we will provide you with tips on how to set goals, think more critically about your future, make steps to plan for college, and even get a new look to go with your new outlook on life!



If I could change one thing about myself, I would change my attitude towards life. I've always felt like everyone was out to get me so I've never really trusted anyone. I know that my attitude toward life has messed up a lot of good things for me, such as good homes and great opportunities. My attitude is one of many things I would like to change about myself.

By Kendra F

GET A NEW OUTLOOK ON LIFE!

Life is full of challenges and obstacles that we are all forced to face at some point in our lives. The difference between facing our obstacles and being overcome by them is how we deal with them. Setting goals, planning ahead, and positive thinking all help to change your outlook on life and help you to face challenges and obstacles. Try thinking of a few things that you would like to improve in your life and reflect on the efforts that you have made to improve them. Here are a few examples of topics for self improvement:

- 👁 Self empowerment;
- 👁 Healthy relationships ;
- 👁 Leadership skills;
- 👁 Relaxation;
- 👁 Self esteem;
- 👁 Spiritual development;
- 👁 Stress management;
- 👁 Time management;
- 👁 Healthier lifestyle; and
- 👁 Improving academic skills.

Taking the time to reflect on your life is important. Without reflection it is impossible to grow. A great way of having personal reflection is to set aside a few minutes in a place where you can be by yourself to write your thoughts about your day in a journal or notebook. With a journal you can go back every so often and review the things you have written. Think about those issues and see if you still feel the same way. If not, what has changed your mind?



The next step in self improvement, after reflection and evaluation, is action. Before jumping the gun and making drastic changes to your life, it is very necessary to plan. You know **what** you want to change, and you know **why** you want to change, but now you've got to figure out **how** you're going to change.

Goal setting is a GREAT way to think solutions through and predict outcomes. Goal setting allows you to devise a plan of attack with the desired outcome in mind. It is extremely important to differentiate between goals and notions. Notions are mental images, representations or fanciful impulses. Unlike goals, they are less concrete, less specific, and much less thought out. Goals on the other hand are detailed and include a plan of action. A good goal must be: a) written; b) challenging; c) believable; d) specific; e) measurable; and f) have a specific deadline.

Example:

Notion –“I want to go to college.”

Goal –“I will go to Harvard and major in English.”

Notice the difference in language between the notion and the goal. The goal includes much more precise information on what is desired and uses positive affirmative language. “I WILL” as opposed to “I WANT” exudes a much more focused and determined mentality. This enthusiasm will help in achieving your goal. If you believe, then you can achieve.

For more information on goals and a great program for setting and tracking goals visit www.mygoals.com.

"Every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is the triumph of enthusiasm. Nothing great was ever achieved without it."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson, 19th Century American author and poet.



To get somewhere, you need power, an engine, and a powerhouse to deliver energy. Look at people around you who are enthusiastic. Being enthusiastic doesn't mean NEVER being critical; it simply means knowing WHEN to be critical. Who do you know that seems to be happy and enthusiastic? Or who achieves a lot? How do they do it? If you don't know, why not ask them?





Preparing for college is a very important process that one should start early. The multitude of options and decisions that need to be made can be overwhelming. Starting early and staying organized is one of the best ways to avoid letting college preparation get the best of you. Here are ten tips from Collegeboard.com to help you prepare for college.

1. Get involved

Getting ready for college is not all work. Find something you really like doing, then dive into it. Maybe you're drawn to sports, student council, music, art, etc. Develop skills and show colleges your ability to make a commitment and stick with it.

2. Take challenging courses

Colleges do look at your grades, but they also pay attention to how difficult your courses are. They want to see that you have challenged yourself. Plus, if you pursue advanced courses, such as Advanced Placement, you may be able to get college credits.

3. Get help

Having trouble in a class? Many schools have peer tutors, students in upper grades who'll help you (for free). Talk to teachers or counselors -- let them know you want extra help.

4. Read

Read at least 30 minutes every day, beyond study and homework. People who read

more know more. And when you take the PSAT and SAT® tests, the time you put into reading will really pay off.

5. Don't delay

You will take the PSAT/ NMSQT as a junior (or even as a sophomore). Most students take the SAT in their junior or senior year. Be sure you are taking the solid math and other courses that get you ready. Talk to your counselor to make sure you are on track.

6. Get the college-bound facts

How can you find out about college admissions, work, and campus life? Ask someone who has done it, such as college students who went to your high school. Get to know your counselors. Ask a career planner at a local college, or a teacher. Do Web research.

7. Involve your family

When parents or guardians have not been to college themselves, they may think they can not help you. That is not true. They can talk to counselors and help you stay on the right path.

8. Look for a mentor

Look for adults who can lend their enthusiasm and help you succeed at your goals. If you are interested in a particular subject or activity talk to a teacher or leader who knows about it. Find a counselor or teacher you trust to talk about your goals.

9. Confront personal roadblocks

If you have a problem that is getting in the way of school-work, do not ignore it. Talk to your friends, family, or another adult – parent, coach, nurse, counselor – who may be able to offer advice or help.

10. Roll up your sleeves

If you expect to go to college later, expect to study now. No one can do it for you. Do not talk the college talk – "I'll go to college to get a great career" – without walking the walk.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO IN ORDER TO GO TO COLLEGE?

By Porsha H.

- 1 – Get my high school diploma
- 2 – While in high school decide what college I want to attend
- 3 – Begin visiting colleges to see which ones I like
- 4 – Out of all those colleges I visit, pick three that I like the most and fill out applications for them
- 5 – Before sending off the applications, find out what the admission criteria is for the schools I like
- 6 – Begin filling out financial aid application forms
- 7 – Remember that I can achieve anything if I set my mind to it.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE

There are plenty of jobs out there if you don't go to college. But you will still have to get some training. There is a Practical Nursing Program at a school which is in my county. You have to be a high school student, a high school graduate or have a GED. You will have to take a test to get into the program. If you're just in high school you can become a Licensed Practical Nurse when you

graduate. There is a high demand for nursing so you will not be making minimum wage. This will be a career instead of a job. You can go to vocational school. You can become a model, actress, or singer. First of all, get your high school diploma so you won't have to flip hamburgers at Burger King. Hopefully, you will have a job or career you like.

By June J.



I think it is a good idea for me to stay in the care of social services until the age of 21. By staying in the care of social services, I will be eligible for certain benefits. Right now, I am an 18 year old senior in high school getting ready to go to college. I have decided to stay in social services care until the age of 21. Since I have made that decision, social services is going to help me out by paying for my college education. I am also thinking about moving into my own apartment. Social services has also agreed to assist with the organization and implementation to get my own apartment with an Independent Living stipend to assist. Most people when they turn 18, decide to sign themselves out of care, but really those people are the ones who are missing out on all of the benefits social services has to offer.

By Michelle B.

The only advice that I could give to another teen would be to stay in school. Don't get into any trouble, and if in foster care use all the benefits that are offered to you. Also, try not to get involved with anyone too soon and rely on yourself and not others.

By Amanda D.



HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

THERE ARE WAYS TO GET MONEY FOR COLLEGE, VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS OR TRADE SCHOOLS OF YOUR CHOICE. DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT TAKES OR HOW TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE?

In Virginia, there are programs that will help assist youth in foster care or former youth in foster care with financial assistance. Some of these programs offer financial grants to allow the youth/former youth the opportunity to further their education by providing grants or scholarships that are not required to be paid back. In Virginia, there is a new program called:

Education and Training Vouchers Program (ETV)

With this program, all students are required to fill out an application through their local department of social services along with copies of financial aid award letters, transcripts, grades, progress reports, registration forms, statement accounts or any other supporting documentation which will help assist with approving an individual for financial assistance.

***For more information, contact Debbie Tomlinson at the Virginia Department of Social Services (804) 726-7579 or deborah.tomlinson@dss.virginia.gov.

One very important thing to think about when it comes to college is paying for your education. There are tons of opportunities to help pay for your education. Here are a few online resources for scholarships. Check them out!!!

www.fastweb.com
www.collegboard.com
www.princetonreview.com
www.wiredscholar.com
www.scholarships.com
www.collegenet.com
www.fastaid.com
www.collegeview.com





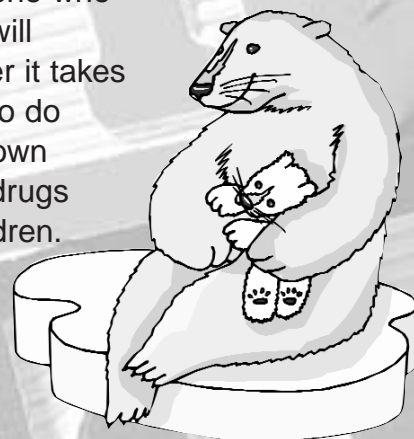
BEYOND PLANNING FOR COLLEGE, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT THE TYPE OF LIFE YOU WOULD LIKE TO LIVE WHEN YOU BECOME AN ADULT. ASK YOURSELF WHERE YOU WANT TO BE IN 10 YEARS? 15 YEARS? DO YOU EVEN WANT TO BE IN VIRGINIA? DO YOU WANT TO HAVE A CAREER? DO YOU WANT TO OWN A HOME? DO YOU WANT A FAMILY? DO YOU WANT TO HAVE CHILDREN, AND IF SO, WHAT TYPE OF PARENT WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE TO YOUR CHILDREN? ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS ARE IMPORTANT TO THINK ABOUT. THOUGH THEY MAY CHANGE AS YOU MATURE, IT IS IMPORTANT TO THINK OF THEM SO THAT YOU CAN HAVE SOME DIRECTION FOR YOUR FUTURE.



What is a good parent?

A good parent, in my definition, is someone that is very mature, someone who will be there for you even through stressful problems. A good parent will always want the best for their children and will be willing to do whatever it takes to see that they will get the best. A good parent will always want you to do better than them and to try your best. A good parent will not let you down unless it is to better you in the long run. A good parent will never put drugs before their child. A good parent will never put a man before their children. A good parent will always support you during good and bad times. A good parent is always loving, unselfish, tender and caring. I will be a good parent. How about you?

By Crystal C.



What is a good parent?

A "good" parent is a parent that has several positive characteristics that identify them. First of all, a "good" parent is a parent who understands their child/children (knows them well). Second, a "good" parent is a parent who is there for their children through all types of situations, no matter what the circumstances may be. Third, a "good" parent is someone that their children can speak positively about. This is a very important characteristic of a "good" parent. However, the fourth most important characteristic of a "good" parent is that they love their children unconditionally. These are just a few characteristics of what a "good" parent is, however there are many more.

By Sherry W.



New you, new style

“Vain trifles as they seem, clothes...change our view of the world and the world’s view of us.”

-Virginia Woolf

- 👁 *This summer season is all about the pink and green. These colors have taken over the racks of stores like The Gap, Banana Republic, American Eagle and Abercrombie and Fitch.*
- 👁 ***Pink has become the new black** and is **definitely** a staple in everyone’s wardrobe this season including guys! For those men who are secure in their manhood sporting a pink **polo** shirt or a **pink baseball cap** simply displays their keen fashion sense!*
- 👁 *This season is all about mature, yet daring, fashions for males. It is all about the grown and sexy blazer paired with the perfect jean and the freshest of fresh white tee’s – instantly heads will turn! For ladies, pleated mini’s and fancy, flowing tops are key elements!*
- 👁 *Bright, vibrant colors give summer fashions that extra excitement that goes perfect with the summer weather. Bright oranges, pinks, greens, blues and whites all complete the summer look.*





Now that we have gotten our minds and our goals together, and we have even gotten ourselves a new look to go with our new attitudes, we are good to go! It is important that we take time for ourselves to discover and find our own identity. Do what is most important to you. Love yourself and treat yourself in a way that reflects that. Respect yourself, and others will respect you. You do not have to wait until Jan. 1 to become the best you can be, the best time to start is now! Stay focused and realize that it is easy to make plans, the hardest part is to follow through with them. Be true to yourself, love yourself, respect yourself and nothing can stop you.



Good luck with the school year!!

*To request more information or submit
suggestions contact the VA-YAC Coordinator at:*

*vayac.coordinator@dss.virginia.gov
or*

mail requests or suggestions to:

**Virginia Youth Advisory Council, Fourth Floor
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This newsletter is sponsored by
Virginia Department of Social Services
Foster Care/Independent Living Program